



Strive for a Healthy Weight

Healthy Living Message

What's Important to Know?

Maintaining a healthy weight can help you feel good and have energy to do the things you want to do. It can also help you prevent and manage many chronic diseases and conditions. Having overweight or obesity increases your risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, heart disease, gallbladder disease, female health disorders, arthritis, some types of cancer, and sleep apnea. If you currently have a higher body weight, losing as little as 5-10% of your current weight can lower your risks for these diseases.

Body mass index (BMI) is a useful measure of weight status for most people. Using a [BMI Calculator](#) may help you learn about your degree of risk and care options. Body weight is linked to energy balance. There are complex factors that affect your weight and your energy balance, which can be thought of as calories in and calories out. These factors may be from a person's body, mind, environment, and society. Weight management focuses on some of the factors within your control like:

- Adjusting your daily calorie intake
- Adjusting your daily activity level
- A combination of both

Striving to Maintain a Healthy Weight

- Find joy in moving your body and becoming more physically active in your everyday life. Strive to include at least 2½ hours each week of moderate-intensity activity.
- Eat when you are hungry, pay attention to when you are full, and seek satisfying foods, such as sources of fiber and protein that you enjoy.

- Tailor your tastes so that you enjoy more nutritious foods. Use more herbs and spices to gradually reduce excess salt, sugar, and dietary fat. Know that there is still room for less nutritious choices in the context of an overall healthy eating plan and lifestyle.
- Make a commitment. Write down the reasons you want to manage your health and weight. Focus on the many benefits you could experience including improved sleep, better mood, decreased pain, improved blood pressure or blood sugar.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about managing your weight, talk with your VA health care team. For tools, resources, and programs to help you achieve a healthy weight, talk to a member of your facility's MOVE!® team. They can also help if you have questions about making a healthy living change. For more information go to: http://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Strive_for_a_Healthy_Weight.asp

Resources

- VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP): www.prevention.va.gov
- MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans: <http://www.move.va.gov>
- Achieving and Maintaining a Healthy Weight: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight>
- Veterans Health Library: <https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/>